

## Doon School Saturday, April 11, 2009 • Issue No. 2215



REGULARS

**POETRY** 

STARRY-EYED

**M**IDTERMS RECAP

#### Editorial

The School looks fresher now; it feels rejuvenated, livelier. It seems that the midterms came as a welcome break this time, for they exhausted bodies. The somnolence of the winter and the relaxation that spring brings have been replaced by the sprightliness of the summer. The School begins anew.

Doon is all about change, and beginnings and ends define life here. The coming of summer heralds many beginnings for those in Doon. The former ATs must now contend with their S-form syllabi, while a fraction of their batch heads abroad to study temporarily in different environs. The barely week-old D-formers are settling into real life in Chandbagh. Hockey has begun, too. And as is the custom after our midterms, the thought of impending Trials hangs about the classrooms and toyes like a faint miasma, thickening in its gloom with each passing day.

Half of the term has gone by, and the other half lies ahead. While the rest of the nation gears up to elect yet another government, the average Dosco will be busy praying that his teachers don't give him euphemised earfuls in front of his parents at the PTM. Some of us have already indulged in concerted preparation for PT, the one-act plays, basketball, badminton, debating and music, all of which will be showcased in the coming facilitator of discipline. couple of months.

Of course, that's all quite far away right now, and so attempts *carpé diem.* But in the meantime, the Weekly will be here to chronicle everything, from start to finish. Rest assured, we don't want to (and will try not to) miss a thing.

### **Sparing the Rod**

School Captain Sriyash Kishorepuria explains the Prefects' experiment with suspending traditional punishments in School

On March 31, after Assembly in the Rose Bowl, I made, in my capacrested weary minds and energised ity as School Captain and on behalf of the prefectorial body, an announcement that was greeted with bemused applause. It was an unusual one, to say the least. It stated, "There will be no prefectorial punishments for the next twenty days." I gave the reasons for such a change. The applause, however, made me wonder if the School community had quite understood the intentions and implications of such an experiment. The applause made this announcement sound like a whimsical gift, which it certainly was not. This is why I felt I must explain more fully the reasons that made us decide to try such a pathbreaking experiment.

> At a Prefects' Council meeting, we examined some of the more common punishments meted out by prefects, and felt that they were, in most cases, actually counterproductive. Punishments are meant to be no more than an inconvenience, to ensure that the offence is not repeated. Somehow, punishments in School tend to reflect a vindictive attitude at times. Having spent five years in school, I also feel that certain punishments hinder one's growth. For example, punishments such as lines and graphs, are an utter waste of time, and are a throwback to a very archaic form of punishment, a 'legacy' from the British public school system. Changesin-Break have been given for the smallest of infringements; also and more importantly, they defeat their purpose in the ineffective way in which they are implemented.

> As A.E. Foot put it so well, "Now is the time, when you no longer waste anyone's energy in putting right your shortcomings, that you will be able to be useful to your fellow beings. The stimulus for these new developments must come from yourself' (italics mine). This brings me to the point of this entire 'no punishment' exercise. The prefects believe that in Doon, a student must learn discipline through all positive means. If a Dosco cannot learn to discipline himself, some of the value of the Doon education is at risk. Also, we are here to expand our horizons and that cannot be done if we have to live in an atmosphere of fear and anxiety. Surely the ethos of Doon permits for change and continual re-examination of our value systems. Thus, this decision may re-define a Prefect's role: from being an enforcer of discipline, to a

I suppose the inevitable question is, after the twenty days, what? First, it will be feedback time, during which we will gather opinions across a spectrum of the community. This feedback will help us in at prescience are superseded by deciding whether a viable new system of deterrent measures can be put into place. I would also request all members of the community to send their views to The Doon School Weekly. Our aim is an ambitious one, and though the idea of having absolutely no punishments seems rather improbable, if the school community comes together, and acts in a mature manner, it may eventually become a reality.

#### Regulars

#### WELCOME

**Peter McLaughlin**, the incumbent Headmaster, is visiting the School between April 9-14. He will interact with the School community and attend the Parent-Teacher Meeting to be held on Saturday, April 11.

Larissa Normanton, a gap-year student from Oundle School, England, will stay with us for the next two months and help out with Art, History and Math.

We wish them a pleasant stay.

#### Music Matters

The following are the Music appointments for the forthcoming year:

School Music Captain: Vedant Chandra

School Orchestra Leaders: Aditi Joshi and Nikhil

Sardana

School Popular Band Leaders: Arjan Singh Maini and

Vidur Yadav

**School Music Secretaries:** Sriyash Kishorepuria and Yashwardhan Jain

We wish them a fruitful tenure.

#### How Was That!

During the midterm break, the School cricket team and the Under-15 team visited **Mayo College, Ajmer**. The teams played matches against Mayo and the Mayoor School. The School team beat the Mayo team by 9 wickets and the Mayoor team by 90 runs. The Under-15 team beat the Mayo team by 11 runs and the Mayoor team by 78 runs.

Well done!

#### CHESS CHAMPS

The following are the results of the **Inter-House Chess Competition** for juniors:

1st: Jaipur2nd: Hyderabad3rd: Kashmir4th: Oberoi5th: TataCongratulations!

CULTURAL LAURELS

The School participated in the **Hopetown School Cultural Festival**, held on April 9. The following are the results in the various categories:

School Orchestra and Choir: 3rd position

Enacted Tale: 1st position

Digital Photography: Nilesh Agarwal (2nd position)

Shourya Gupta (3rd position)

The School shared the **Overall Winner's** trophy with Mussoorie International School.

Congratulations!

### CAREER CALL

The Careers' notice board will feature **Forensic Science** as a career this week. All future sleuths must look it up.

### Poetry | Polusions

#### Abhilaksh Lalwani

The world around me has changed.
Now, no longer can I see,
Those images of past eternity,
Those illusions of a warped reality,
Conversations that were but fantasy.

There's tension in the air all around.

Ignorance is truly bliss,

But not when it comes to this.

Into the oblivious lakes I strayed,

Of philosophical moments made.

Of swirling fountains I drank,

And the birds of love sang,

And I fell.

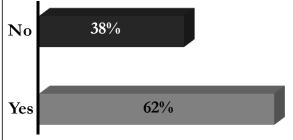
And I kept falling, kept falling, kept falling...
While all around me the world arose,
First the sky, then the clouds, the mountains,
And finally, after broken steps of trees, and seas,
The Earth.

But, then it happened,
Just before the Great Quashing,
The world around me changed.
I could see and I could sing,
For those images were but past eternity,
Those conversations but fantasy,
And the illusions just a warped reality.
A reality which truly roused me.

### Opinion

Opinion Poll

After having received the results of the Test Week, do you still believe that the new schedule is better?



(278 members of the School community were polled)

**Next Week's Question:** Do you feel that the decision to suspend punishments in School will achieve its stated aim?

### Unquotable Quotes

I will confiscate you.

**SMB** uses authority.

Face your wash.

MAK faces facts.

He took me tennis.

Rishab Kothari is game.

It held 4,800 rice.

**RSF** counts the grains.

I have sticked the book.

Nikhil Sardana, literary adherent.

#### |Report|

### To Infinity...and Beyond!

Revant Nayar reports on the Astronomy Society's trip to Pune during the midterm break

Twelve of us, accompanied by RMR and KPS, set out on the evening of April 2 to visit the Interuniversity Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) in Pune. We anticipated a completely unique and enlightening midterm experience, and our expectations were fully rewarded.

On the afternoon of April 3, we reached IUCAA amid the immense heat of Pune, where we were to stay for three days. The campus consisted of gardens and well-lit buildings and was adorned with portraits and statues of the great scientists of the past. After a

sumptuous lunch, we were briefed by IUCAA's Outreach Director, Arvind Paranjpye. This was followed by a visit to the campus library, with books on every subject related to astrophysics, as well as detailed posters depicting galaxies, gravity and many more intriguing ideas such as black holes and supernovae. Even though most of the books were beyond

our comprehension, the ideas captivated our imagination. In the evening, it was time for the sky view which was a thrilling prospect for most of us. Three 6-inch reflecting telescopes provided a breathtaking view of the Orion nebulae, Saturn and its ring and the Moon with its craters. One of the telescopes was on equatorial mount making it follow the sky object automatically. It was also very interesting to meet the telescope makers who told us how a telescope is designed.

The next morning, we were to wake up early to leave for a tour of the professional observatory situated at a remote location in the Giravali hills. We were accompanied by a few National Defence Academy cadets from Khadakwasla, and interaction with them revealed just how spartan their lifestyle is. The optical telescope which we visited was only about three years old, and the location was chosen after much analysis of the climatic conditions. The location in the hills also housed the microwave towers which are in the line of sight to a point in Africa. These are used for long distance communication. Throughout our visit, Mr Paranipye regularly kept us informed about the many aspects of astronomy: how the distances to the stars were calculated (by parallax method, Doppler shift, etc.), how the telescopes operate, the objects which the radio telescope detects, etc. The telescope itself, despite being small by international standards, occupied a

large chamber. It was a two-metre reflecting telescope with the primary mirror weighing four tons, and was a spectacle in itself. It is coated with a thin layer of aluminium for reflecting light to its secondary mirror. The entire arrangement floats over a 20 micron thick layer of oil. The oil is required to give it a smooth movement while observing the sky. It was awe-inspiring to observe the massive dome being opened, and the telescope being rotated by motorised controls.

Later in the evening we went for a visit to the city of Pune, and the Pune Central Mall in particular. After

a mouth-watering dinner at the Food Court, we returned to the campus.

The next morning, we were taken to the Science Centre at IUCAA. Here. Arvind Gupta, a renowned designer of science toys, displayed many of his creations. These included 2-D and 3-D structures made of matchsticks, magnetic levitation, a simple DC motor, a musical drinking



straw, and many such 'toys', which actually demonstrated laws of physics. These were made of simple materials such as pencils, wires, tyre valves and ring magnets and are aimed at making science enjoyable, simple and easy to identify with for both rural and urban children. The session provided food for thought for quite some time afterwards. Our programme ended with a practical demonstration of dispersion of light from a CD-Rom, and the subsequent formation of a spectrum. It was viewed through a paper model which creates a small dark region around the spectrum. It can also be used to observe the spectrum emitted by other light sources.

Our next destination was the city of Mumbai, where we spent the night of April 5 in one of the hotels. We visited the Nehru Science Centre (we could not, unfortunately, visit the Planetarium, as it remains closed on Mondays). After an hour-long movie in the 'Science Odyssey' depicting the wildlife and migration in the African savannah we took in the Science Centre. This held a large variety of models and apparatus which depicted laws related to light, sound and motion. It also featured sections on cosmology, archaeology and aerodynamics which contained machines and models providing an elaborate and practical demonstration of laws and theories.

On the whole, this was certainly a learning experience like none other, and generated immense interest in astrophysics and other sciences.

# MIDTERM REWIND

The Weekly takes a sneak 'peak' at what some of the School community did these midterms

A small, motley bunch of four Sc formers (three of whom were from Tata House) travelled to Dayara Bugyal for their midterms. While the party leader struggled with his [far too] numerous responsibilities, the rest of the gang indulged in making movies and annoying him. Even the wonderful trek was finished only after a lot of 'effort'. Things changed for the worse after the party leader repeatedly 'broke' both his feet and suffered an asthma attack. They struggled to survive in Dayara Bugyal's frigidity, and wound up in School, nursing various ailments – indigestion, fever, brain damage, et al. For the record, it was fun.



Escorted parties of A formers from Hyderabad and Jaipur Houses went to Har-ki-Doon for midterm. Continuous trekking through Sankri, Taluka and Osla was very tiring. However, on reaching Har-ki-Doon, all their fatigue vanished. The scenic mountains made a beautiful spectacle. It was an exhilarating, adventurous experience. They also gave themselves a pat on the back for completing a really tough trek.

An Sc-form party headed toward Chaur Peak turned out to be a truly memorable one, being their last in School. The trek beginning from Nauradhar to Water Point was not particularly difficult, but the rain and subsequent fog made it uncomfortable for the group. Even though the weather conditions remained terrible, the slippery downhill path was negotiated without any accidents. The midterms ended with fun as the entire party headed for Shimla. In all, it was an unbeatable combination of adventure and enjoyment.

A private party consisting of Shatrunjai Dewan, Varun Rai, Kartic Sharma, Bharat Ganju, Angad Bawa and Neel Madhav, had probably one of the most eventful midterms. Starting with an accident caused by wet roads and a lightning-fast *barasingha*, they went on to encounter an extremely hard trek. The scenic view of Kush Kalyan though, and the fact that they were the only party to complete it, made them feel that the trek was worth it. From a comical *khaccharvala* to a guide who was a carbon copy of Cristiano Ronaldo (seriously!), this was one midterm that that the party will never forget, for its sheer variety of experiences.

A group of twenty-one boys, escorted by SRT, VKL, SMB and SNA, visited Dodital for their midterm break. Their daily schedule included trekking, which was enjoyed by most of the boys. The trip promoted interaction and bonding among boys from different houses. Often, there were conversations that started before the bonfire was lit and ended late at night in the tents. Such experiences cannot be forgotten easily.

A private midterm party comprising Abhilaksh Lalwani, Ritvik Kothiwal, Pranit Verma, Amarinder Sodhi, Anuj Bhatia and Siddharth Bhatnagar was to travel to Kalyani, but returned after reaching Reeh. A road block caused them to climb a landslide in the rain and dodge falling boulders while dragging reluctant mules behind them, as the guide had decided to take off on his own. They survived only because of the entertainment provided by Anuj Bhatia.

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